

WARRIOR LEADER

Volume 8, Number 4

Operation Warrior Forge

Fort Lewis, Wash.

July 30, 2004



Dropping in ...

... and movin' out

Patrolling STX is the final test

INSIDE:

Squad STX

Commissioned from Iraq

Beauty queen goes green machine

Salute Battery fires cannonades

An integral part of our Graduation Ceremony is the commissioning of cadets who have completed all of their requirements with their successful graduation from Warrior Forge. It is one of my greatest honors to administer the oath of office to these cadets and then watch their friends, families and spouses pin the gold bars upon their shoulders. Each of these cadets has a story, and I'd like to share just a few of them with you.

One commissionee was pinned by her husband and her 13-month-old baby. During the summer of 2003, she was unable to attend the National Advanced Leadership Camp, due to her pregnancy. A year later, she not only faced the "usual" challenges of Warrior Forge, but also overcame the very real physical challenge of recovering from the birth of

her beautiful little girl last year. She got herself back into shape, successfully graduated and is one her way into the Army as a lieutenant. I heartily welcome this new Army Family to our fold.

Another young man stood tall in our formation and was pinned by his mother, grandparents and sister. Immediately afterwards, we all moved to the Army Community Services Center, where his father, a mobilized Army Reserve officer serving in Iraq, administered his oath of office via a Video Teleconference. This Army Family, separated by ten thousand miles and the call of duty, was still bound together during this poignant moment in a young lieutenant's life.

At yesterday's graduation, the



Col. Steven R. Corbett

fourth son of a retired Army Colonel received his gold bars. He wore one brother's uniform, another's "US" insignia and was pinned using one gold bar from each of his other brothers by his father. The selfless service of this entire family stands testimony to this family's sense of duty and patriotism.

Another new lieutenant received his first salute from his grandfather, a World War II veteran and retired noncommissioned officer. This family's service spans over 60 years of continuous service to our nation. A young lady was commissioned earlier this summer by her parents. Last year, she left Fort Lewis before completing her summer training, in order

to be with her Army-retiree father after he suffered a debilitating stroke. A year later, leaning heavily upon a cane, he traveled two thousand miles to pin his own gold bars upon his daughter, after she returned here this year and successfully graduated from Warrior Forge.

Every cadet who attends Warrior Forge has his or her own story of trials, tribulations and challenges. The lesson for us all is that determination and the will to win can overcome any obstacle that fate places in our path. Remember our Warrior Ethos...never quit, and never accept defeat. Each of these stories could have ended very differently, but the Army, OUR Army provided the opportunity for each of these men and women to achieve.

I'm proud of each of them, and proud of all of you who continue to face the challenges of achieving a commission in the Army.

Congratulations on completing Warrior Forge. As you head back for your final year of schooling, I'd like to take a moment to remind you about the meaning of your training at Fort Lewis.

With your successes here, you've taken an important step toward becoming a second lieutenant who is relevant and ready - a leader commanders must rely upon and Soldiers must trust. Reflect now about the

training you received and apply that with some forward thinking.

Next year you will very likely be leading troops in combat. We Soldiers are in a serious business, conducting a sobering mission. When assigned to your first duty station, you will be at the critical level of leadership - the platoon and staff-section levels - where Soldiers really operate. The reality is that lieutenants and sergeants are on the



Command Sgt. Maj. Lewis Ferguson

ground as events unfold. You don't get a "do-over" when leading American Soldiers, so continue to train hard as you prepare for your commission.

No doubt you've already read stories about the lieutenants serving in Iraq, Korea, Kuwait and Afghanistan and other places around the world, who were cadets last year like you are now. They are the leaders who are up close and personal when

Soldiers are killed or wounded. They are the leaders who write the letters home and bear the weight of responsibility when bad things happen.

Your attitude is vital to preparing for this responsibility. It's the things you do every day to get ready that will pay the dividends later. You won't have the luxury to get ready tomorrow. Do everything you can do today, so when (not if) you're leading that platoon in war you will have done all the correct things to do the job right. You will be the point of impact. Train hard, and be ready.

Support the Cadets

By Chap. (Maj.) Kimono Nicolaides

"Chaplain Nicolaides!"

The excited voice rang out amongst the noon-time bustle at the Biop Coalition Military Airbase in Baghdad. Surprised, I looked up from my MRE to discover the smiling face of a young lieutenant coming in my direction. "You may not remember me," he said, "but I was one of the cadets in your regiment a couple of years ago at Fort Lewis."

In the ensuing conversation, I was to learn that this young man had used an educational delay after his graduation from college to complete a master's degree, and then been commissioned in the Armor branch. Now he was assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division, which had been instrumental in the siege of Baghdad a few months earlier. Before the siege and fall of Baghdad, he had been busy escorting VIPs for the office of the Provisional Coalition Authority.

This encounter with the lieutenant was one that stuck in my mind as one of the brighter moments of my year-long tour in the Middle East. It also assured me of God's faithfulness to fulfill one promise which Jesus made to His disciples -when He said, "whosoever is willing to give but a cup of water to one of these, the least of my brethren, in my name, will not lose His reward."

So this year when I returned here to Fort Lewis for my third summer to serve with Warrior Forge, I was more determined than ever to provide the best ministry possible to these cadets.

I discovered during the inprocessing briefing I give that the cadets possess many unique musical talents. Those who attend the graduation ceremonies and hear a cadet's rendition of the National Anthem would surely agree that they are richly blessed in their vocal abilities. There are also many who play a wide variety of instruments — and who would be more than willing to employ their skills to the glory of God during our worship services. Among the cadets are players of guitars,

drums, violins, flutes, trumpets, trombones, saxophones, keyboard, harmonica — and even bagpipes.

I found that guitars are available on loan from the Nelson Recreation Center, to whom I am very grateful for the willing contribution. However, I have yet to find a source for instruments that would allow these cadets to employ all of their musical abilities while here at Warrior Forge.

Aside from harmonicas, they are forced to leave their own instruments at home when they come here; therefore, our Post Chaplain suggested that an article in the Warrior Leader making the community aware of this need would be useful in obtaining donations of secondhand instruments. So here is your opportunity. If you would like to contribute to our newly founded musical instrument archive, then just give our Warrior Forge chaplain or chaplain's assistant a call at (253) 966-5859.

Thank you and may God be with you.



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Col. Steven R. Corbett

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Professors, we want YOU!

By 2nd Lt. Brian Fallon

From July 8 to 11, Operation Warrior Forge at Fort Lewis, Wa., hosted 96 professors, deans, vice presidents and other university faculty members from across the country with the 2004 Warrior Forge Educators Visit. An additional 130 Nurse educators visited Warrior Forge from July 20 to 23.

U.S. Army Cadet Command annually invites educators to visit Fort Lewis and see first hand what their ROTC students accomplish during the summer. The visit allows Cadet Command to showcase Warrior Forge. The focus is on explaining leadership development and assessment of cadets and to give the educators a greater appreciation for the Army and ROTC. In their four days at Warrior Forge, the educators are shown various training events such as the Confidence Course, Basic Rifle Marksmanship, Rappelling, Slide for Life, Field Leaders Reaction Course (FLRC), Squad Situational Exercise and Individual Tactics Training. These events highlight the importance of confidence building and leadership training that is central to the mission of Warrior Forge. Additionally, the educators are briefed on the mechanics of cadet leadership development at both the university and at Warrior Forge.

The educators didn't just watch the cadets training, they participated. Many professors went off the rappel tower (some "Australian style" -

face first) and experiencing the Slide for Life. The most common reaction they had at every event was to say, "That was fun!" They had a chance to participate in Basic Rifle Marksmanship, firing 20 rounds at the Qualification Range. George Foster of Tarleton State actually managed to hit all twenty targets. Later, Foster admitted that, prior to beginning his academic career, he'd been a Soldier, an Army firefighter.

Many educators were impressed with the Field Leader Reaction Course in particular. First they were all briefed on the concept of the FLRC. Compared to previous training events, FLRC was less focused on confidence and more focused on leadership and the eight Troop Leading Procedures. Following their briefing, the guests broke up into groups and tackled several obstacles in the same manner as the cadets do, with evaluations of their performance. They performed very well, completing most of the obstacles given within the time allowed.

Beyond field training, the educators also attended a social and formal dinner, escorted by instructors from their schools' ROTC programs. But not all of their meals were so civilized. To add to the Warrior Forge experience, they were served that Army-wide standard: MREs. To the chagrin of cadets and instructors alike, many loved the field ration meals. Following some instructions on proper heating and eating by officers and NCOs present, the educators tore into their




Jeremy O'Bryan

Educators and cadre watch cadets at ITT.

meals. With just a little bit of instruction, the educators were cooking up such favorites as G.I. pudding, the MRE hamburger and the ever-popular chili-mac with cheese.

As a final event, the educators all ate at the Gibson DFAC (dining facility), paired with cadets from their schools. Eating with the cadets was "a great chance to learn what Warrior Forge is really like for our students," said Ms. Ashley Cade of Washington University.

When it came time to pack up and head back to their colleges and universities, the educators left with an appreciation and respect for what their students go through when they put on their uniforms. There was one other change in the educators: a new word had entered their everyday vocabularies, a word commonly heard at the training sites, and then on the buses - *Hooah!* 

Father commissions son ... from Iraq to Fort Lewis via video teleconference



2nd Lt. Stephan Arnold

2nd Lt. Vincent Elbert says the oath of office as his father administers the ceremony all the way from Iraq.


By Maj. Douglas Goodfellow

Three thousand miles is a long way to travel to watch a commissioning ceremony, 6,000 miles is a short distance when you use technology. For 2nd Lt. Vincent Elbert both were accomplished. When the Lieutenant was commissioned July 20 at Fort Lewis, Washington, his mother Laurie, grandparents Glenn and Rosemarry Roux and girlfriend Kate Murray were all in attendance. His father was the only one missing from this important occasion. Deployed with the United States Army's 420th Engineer Brigade in Iraq since January, Lt. Col. Fredric Elbert used technology to be at his son's graduation.

Shortly after the traditional

graduation and commissioning ceremony, where officers repeat the oath of office, have their bars pinned on and render their first salute brand new lieutenant and family headed for the video teleconferencing center on post. Six thousand miles away in Iraq, Lt. Col. Elbert stood impatiently in front of a television monitor. Would he be able to see his son and wife? Would the telecast be suddenly lost? Twenty minutes later these questions were all answered.

The colonel had administered the oath of office to his son and brand new lieutenant Elbert was following the family's strong military tradition. Besides his father being a member of the Army, his grandfather had retired as a Sergeant First Class. Lieutenant Elbert a recent graduate from State University of New York at Brockport, hopes to pursue a career in the Army's medical service corps.

At the conclusion of the ceremony Col. Steven Corbett, Commander of Warrior Forge gave newly commissioned Lieutenant Elbert a hug for his dad. Corbett asked that Lt. Col. Elbert give Mrs. Corbett, who is Maj. Corbett and also deployed in Iraq, a hug from him. Lt. Col. Elbert replied, "Only with my wife's permission". Mrs. Elbert approved with a chuckle. 

General's son continues the family business




Brig. Gen. Richard V. Geraci (left), son-in-law of Harold and Anne Sehl, administers the oath of office to his son and the Sehl's grandson, 2nd Lt. Jefferey V. Geraci (right) at Fort Lewis, Wa. Brig. Gen. Geraci and his wife, the former Kathleen A. Sehl both graduated from Rome Catholic High School in 1973. They currently live in Washington D.C.

Story and photo by Maj. Richard Neufang

Brig. Gen. Richard V. Geraci, Director, National Security Space Architect, administered the oath of office to his son, 2nd Lt. Jefferey V. Geraci, on July 8, just prior to his graduation from the Leader Development and Assessment Course at Fort Lewis, Wa. In May, the younger Geraci graduated from New Mexico

Military Institute (NMMI), in Roswell, N.M., where he received an Associate of Arts degree and completed the majority of his ROTC training. Lieutenant Geraci will be assigned to the Kansas National Guard as an infantry platoon leader and will next attend the University of Kansas in Lawrence. Commissioned under the Army's early commission program, 2nd Lt. Geraci will study business and, upon graduation, transition to active duty in the Army.

Brig. Gen. Geraci attended Fort Lewis Advanced Camp in 1974 and graduated from NMMI in 1975.

"I would have never guessed that 30 years from the day I graduated from advanced camp that I would be back commissioning my son," he said. "He joins many great service men and women serving our country today. My wife and I are very proud of him." Lieutenant Geraci is the third generation to serve in the military. His grandfather, Lt. Col. Vincent C. Geraci, who served in Vietnam, retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1973. 

Take Charge!

Patrolling STX puts cadets' leadership skills into overdrive

By Spc. Monica Wehri



Spc. Monica Wehri

Move out! The order is given to proceed from the Landing Zone to a pre-determined field location and link up with the simulated allied forces.

Patrolling Situational Training Exercise is the ultimate training event at Warrior Forge, during which cadets use all the skills they have learned and refined since the first day of camp. Land navigation, defensive and offensive battle skills, team leadership – even deciding whether the patrol faces enemy combatants or innocent civilians – are all part of an officer's tool kit. This final challenge tests all these skills.

Patrolling STX is 72 hours long, stretched over four days. By the time cadets start their exercise, they have already been in the field for four days, coming directly from Squad STX. This extended field time gives cadets a more realistic field experience.

Fifth Regiment Cadet Stacy Gross, from Florida Southern College, said the exercise was a great glimpse of real world soldiering.

"It gave us a taste of what Soldiers are going through overseas. Eight days here doesn't compare to what they are going through," she said. "If I can't handle eight days, I shouldn't be here."

Each day presents a different mission. Cadets start with a 4km tactical road march, then set up a patrol base. They review combat patrolling principles and go through a mix of helicopter transport, land navigation and they confront role players who act as Civilians On the Battlefield. This is a variable Soldiers find themselves experiencing with increasing regularity in the real world.

Refresher classes run four to six hours. Cadets learn how to raid, movement-to-contact, ambushing, reconnaissance, presence patrolling, hasty defense and base patrol. Each patrol is issued an M-60 machine gun and a 25-pound,



Spc. Monica Wehri

In the role of Primary Intelligence Officer for the fictitious nation of Palomas, Capt. Thomas Dye from the Patrolling STX Committee staff gives a broken-English briefing to a designated cadet leader.

shoulder-carried, PRC-77 radio.

Throughout training, cadets get intelligence updates about the fictional country of Palomas. When cadets arrive at the exercise, Primary Intelligence Officer Capt. Thomas Dye from the Patrolling STX staff greets them — in character and speaking broken English. Dye welcomes cadets to Palomas and put cadets in the patrolling mindset. His character briefs cadets on the situation in Palomas and tells horror stories about fictional civilians getting their simulated thumbs cut off.

Dye explained how one of the most stressful situations cadets deal with during Patrolling is interacting with civilians while trying to conduct their combat missions. Civilians are included in the missions to raise the level of decision-making stress. The civilian variable keeps cadets on their toes, testing their quick-thinking skills, and maximizing their leadership under pressure. Cadets have to figure out who might be the bad guys, and who are innocent civilians.

"We've patterned our actions off what we are seeing coming out of Afghanistan and Iraq



Moving out on line, the cadets seek their enemy.



A Paloman civilian on the battlefield tells a cadet of torture and murder.

right now,” Dye explained This is to give cadets the most realistic scenario to make them stop, think and figure out what they have to do to solve these problems,” .

Looking back, Cadet Gross feels being a platoon leader during Patrolling STX provided her greatest learning experience.



It takes a lot of guts to be in the OPFOR ... lots of plastic guts to simulate wounds like this protruding intestine. A cadet checks for documents.

“It’s a lot different than being the follower,” she said. “You really have to be focused and on your game, because you are taking in so many more things. Everyone out there was supportive. Everyone who was a follower helped make you look good. When you were a follower you did your best to support your leader.”


Patrolling is a physical as well as a mental challenge, she added.

“You have to keep a positive attitude, even if your body feels broken you need to tell yourself to keep going.”

Patrolling STX cadre said cadets are not graded on how well they do tactically, but are

assessed on how well they do as leaders. Cadets are judged on attributes such as mental, physical and emotional performance. They are also judged conceptual, interpersonal, technical and tactical skills. Lastly, they are judged on communicating, decision-making, motivating, planning and executing the mission.

Gross said she learned some valuable lessons during the exercise.

“When you are in charge, always stay cool and make a decision, because you are the one everyone is looking to be a leader. Even if it’s the wrong decision, make a decision.” 



Whatever the mission, sentries are posted for operational security at every halt.



“Get down,” says this cadet, and it’s not an order to start dancing. Part of the wargame scenario is handling prisoners.



Each cadet team is issued a PRC-77 radio to facilitate communications with their commanders and other friendly elements on the battlefield. The bulky box adds a lot more gear to the rucksack and sleeping bag already carried.



Rounding up the bad guys brings this cadet a smile of pleasure as an OPFOR player is secured ...



... while another OPFOR insurgent is frisked for weapons and documents.

Salute Battery honors Soldiers' commitment to service

By Rebekah Courson

Duty, honor and country are three words that unite every Soldier, regardless of their rank, their gender, or their religious or ethnic background.

The three words mark the firing of three-gun cannonades – to symbolize unity – at the Regimental Activation Ceremonies and Regimental Graduations at Warrior Forge. The cannonades are fired by 75mm M1A1 Howitzers minted in 1943, which have received only minor modifications over the years.

The words duty, honor and country are three important elements in the Soldiers' Creed, which is the cornerstone of Army Values, said Sgt. 1st Class Dale Jarvey.

"The guns have been demilitarized to fire only ceremonial ammunition," Jarvey said. "The only threat is if you're standing in front of them. That's not a good thing."

The cannon crew consists of 22 people from Army Reserve units that rotate about every 17 days. Jarvey said 16 of the people actual go through Drill and Ceremony and maintenance training.

"Then we pick the best," he said. "So everyone gets a shot at it. They have all gone through it."

During the ceremonies, each cannon crew is comprised of a loader, firer and a noncommissioned



2nd Lt. Douglas Blevins

Smoke, flame and sparks accentuate the sharp report of a Salute Battery howitzer as it fires in sequence with two other guns.

officer-in-charge. An extra crew stands by.

Working on a Salute Battery cannon crew gives the Reservists an opportunity to do something new.

"They're not artillery personnel," Jarvey said. "They're mainly logistical personnel. They're doing something different then what they're used to. It's exciting."


The time the Reservists put in each day, though, is about 14 hours.

"It's a long, strung-out day," Master Sgt. Dennis Todd, training division NCOIC, said. "It's not short hours they're out here."

Every day the guns are cleaned and checked for proper operation, and the crew has dry run rehearsals. The crew must also transport the guns one at a time between North Fort Lewis for activation ceremonies and the main post graduation ceremonies.

Starting next year, Todd said, the Salute Battery crews will have two sets of howitzers each. One set will be used at graduation, and the other at RAC.

The long hours, though, do not stop the Reservists from wanting to stay for more then their 17 day run.

"It's a good experience," said crew member Pvt. 2nd Class Michael Dokko. "I decided to stay longer so I could learn more." 

Cadet Blood Drive ups Madigan stocks

By 2nd Lt. Douglas Blevins

A blood drive for Warrior Forge hosted by the Armed Services Blood Program kicked off July 3 with the goal of seeking donations from each of the 14 Warrior Forge cadet regiments and their cadre. At press time, Regiments 1 through 9 have donated more than 1,139 units of blood.

This opportunity to give blood was the first for some cadets. 4th Regiment Cadet Micah Hall, from Princeton University, went to the blood drive not really interested in donating, but after the donor recruiter from Western Regional Medical Command explained the importance of blood donations, he was more than persuaded to give.

"It's an excellent thing to do," said Cadet Joseph Beatty, another 4th Regiment cadet from Ohio University. He has given several times before with the American Red Cross.

The blood drive continues through Aug. 11, giving all 14 regiments the opportunity to contribute. So far, more than 1,118 cadets and 21 cadre members have donated.

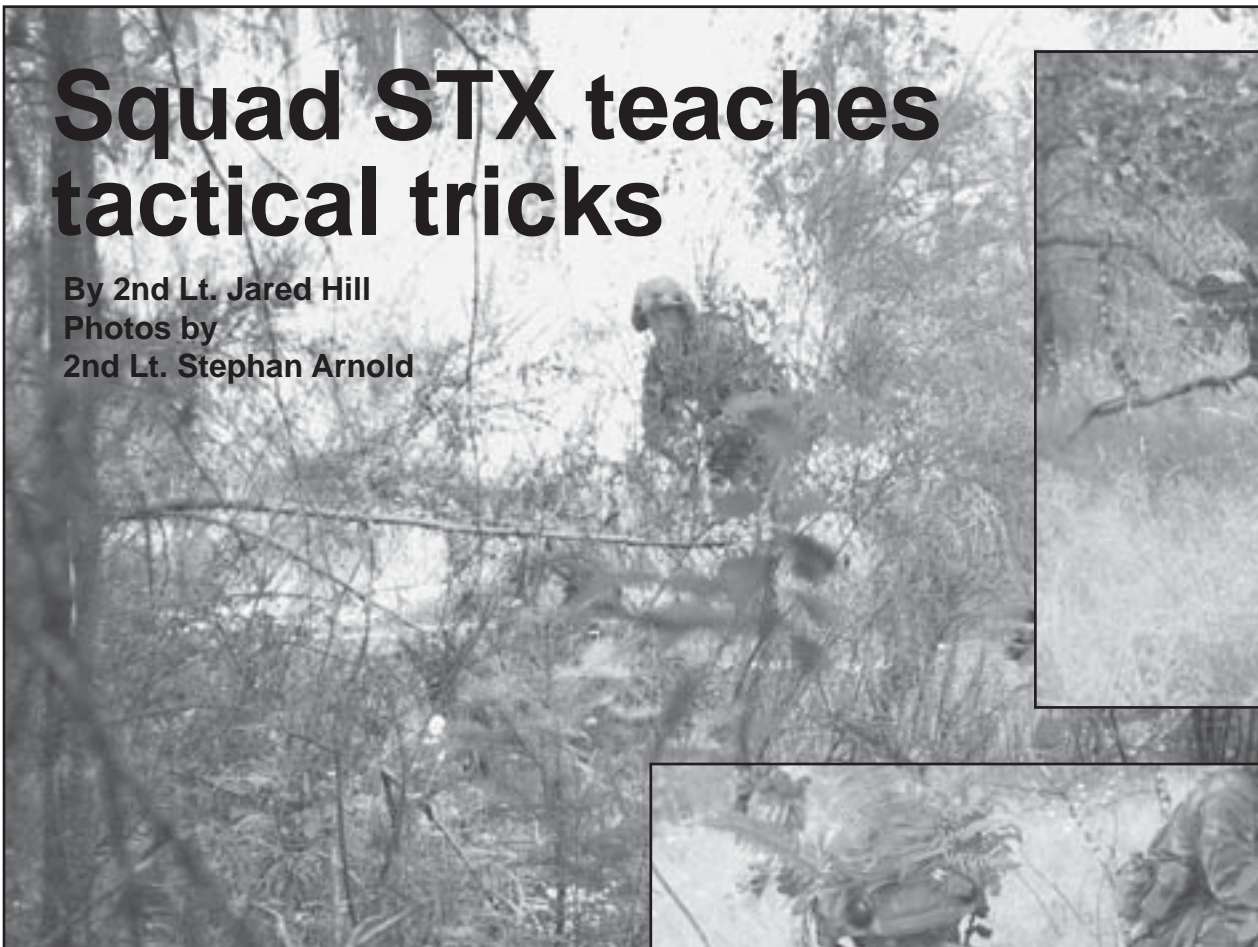
The ASBP was started in 1953 to support military members during times of conflict and, since the beginning, they have collected nearly 5,000,000 units of blood.

2nd Louie By Bob Rosenburgh



Squad STX teaches tactical tricks

By 2nd Lt. Jared Hill
Photos by
2nd Lt. Stephan Arnold



(Above and left) The scenarios at Squad STX make extensive use of the Multiple-Indexed Laser Engagement System, known as MILES. One device is the light-safe laser emitter on the muzzle of the weapon just behind the blank adapter. When the weapon fires, the report actuates a laser burst. If the aim is accurate, the beam hits sensors mounted on the target's helmet, triggering a beeper that means the cadet is hit.

Stealth, situational awareness, and mission goals are one this sneaky cadet's mind at Squad STX.

For cadets at Warrior Forge, the long days filled with training, evaluations and exercises culminate with Squad Situational Training Exercises. This final set of exercises gives cadets two opportunities to lead their squad — and showcase their leadership and tactical capabilities.

Cadets can receive a variety of missions during this last evaluation. Some missions can include taking out a bunker, reacting to contact with enemy and setting up an ambush.

"In the end, it is to help cadets build their leadership capabilities," said Lt. Col. Mark Carmody, University of Scranton, the Squad STX officer-in-charge. If cadets, according to Carmody, "mature in their leadership style," then they have learned what they needed to.

Carmody said cadets should prepare on campus both physically and mentally for they challenges they will face.

"(Cadets should use) individual skills toward



those things that will best benefit the squad as they go through their training," Carmody suggested. The squad will function better as a team and ultimately help each individual with his or her evaluation.

Lane evaluators go through extensive training before they mentor the cadets out on the lanes.

"Trainer-evaluators are experienced soldiers," said Carmody. "We standardize what the trainer-evaluators expect for a cadet by going through the classes on the missions and the battle drills so that they know what an average cadet is expected to do."

A member of the Squad STX Committee, who walks the lanes with the cadets, issues operation orders. During this time cadets are very stressed. They have to remember all the training that they have received while at school. They must receive the Operations Order, issue a warning order, and plan a tactical mission according to Army Field Manual 7-8.

They also must prepare a squad operations order, issue it, conduct rehearsals, and perform



Individual tasks, such as handling a prisoner after capture, are key elements evaluated at Squad STX.

pre-combat inspections — all before the mission starts.

Once on the lane each cadet must move tactically, remember when to report and, most importantly, accomplish the mission. The cadets are stressed and find themselves in sticky situations especially once the firefight begins and squad members start dying.

Cadet Caitlin Dempsey, Wake Forest University, said she liked Squad STX because of the ability to work with the people from her squad with whom she was able to gel during regimental time.

"I just learned a lot of different ways to go about completing a mission," Dempsey said. She contributes this to the way her peers conducted themselves in their lanes and the input from the evaluators.

Her advice to cadets facing Squad STX: "Use the time in-garrison, as much as you can, with your squad. This will help the team effort."



These cadets conduct their After Action Review, a critical task that follows every mission to capture lessons learned.

From beauty queen to Army green:

Cadet trades her pageant shoes for combat boots

By
Janey Fassbender



No, she's not waving to the fans ... that's Cadet Tambra Puro, from Utah Valley State College, winding up for the pitch at the Hand Grenade Range during Operation Warrior Forge 2004.

Tambra Puro is not an average beauty queen. She can throw a grenade. She can fire an M-16. She knows how to survive the toxic gas of the confidence chamber.

Puro, a member of the Utah National Guard and an 11th Regiment cadet from the ROTC at Utah Valley State College, has been doing beauty pageants since she was 11 years old.

Her first pageant was "Missy Miss Kane County," in which she was crowned queen in her division. Since then, she has placed in several pageants, such as the "Miss Outstanding Teenager of Utah" and "Utah's National Teenager Pageant." In 1999, Puro won the title of "Utah's Junior National Teenager" and headed to the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tenn., for the national pageant. She retraced her footsteps to Nashville in 2001 after winning the senior competition.

The cadet curtailed her pageant-winning when terrorists attacked the U.S. on Sept. 11, 2001. Puro said that was her "call to arms."

In 2000, her older sister Tiara had joined the Utah National Guard, and suggested Tambra do the same. At the time, Tambra thought there was no way she would ever join the military.

"The mere thought of doing push-ups and having drill sergeants yell at me was not exactly something that I thought I would be good at or would enjoy," Puro said.

She had a change of heart on the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks. Puro watched a speech that President George W. Bush gave to the troops, and knew what she had to do.

"The scholarship, the money, et cetera, could

not convince me to join. Joining had to mean something to me personally. I wanted to be a member of the most elite and respected team and family on this Earth!" she said.

Within a week she had enlisted in the Army National Guard.

With her sister Tiara's help, Tambra prepared for Basic Training, and found the physical aspects to be the hardest. She excelled, and received the maximum number of points on the physical fitness test. Her drill sergeants even made her a squad leader.

Puro grasped the leadership and responsibility and it quickly became apparent that she had what it took to become an officer. She continued to show her leadership abilities at Advanced Individual Training, where she was awarded the Army Achievement Medal for attaining the best possible scores for academics and fitness. Puro followed the suggestion of one of her drill sergeants and signed up for the ROTC program at UVSC when she returned home.

Now, firmly planted in a life she once couldn't see herself living, Puro's view of herself has changed. Perhaps her attitude has something to do with her success.

"If you can dream it, you can achieve it," she asserts, like she's talking to pageant judges. "As soon as I put my mind to something, and push myself outside of my comfort zone, I'm able to achieve anything."

Puro's Army colleagues, as they spend time with her, get to see the various facets of her persona.

"She's a real lady, but she's not afraid of get-

ting dirty and being part of the team," said Maj. Matthew Whitney, Assistant Professor of Military Science. "She doesn't act like she should have any special treatment."

Her success with military training echoes through her college coursework – and her life. Puro is studying community health and military science. She is active in the community and volunteers, founding two programs: the "Junior Pink Ladies" who volunteer at the local hospital, and the "Safety Kids Club" at the junior high school. She also serves as the staff director to the "Utah National Teenager Pageant."

Puro chose to be in the Guard so that she could be closer to home, but she is well aware of the possibility of getting called to a war zone. This likelihood became a reality when the 1457th Combat Engineer Unit, which she was assigned to, was activated to Iraq. Tambra stayed behind, but realizes that her turn to go overseas still might come. In standard pageant-queen fashion, she said she looks at a deployment as a chance to help those who are less fortunate.



Left and far left photos by Stephen E. Puro

Elbow, elbow, wrist, wrist ... okay, now she's waving as Puro wears crown and gown on an elaborate parade float that serves as a moving platform to display her charms.

She missed being selected Miss Utah in the June pageant, but keeps her upbeat attitude. The time-consuming, demanding atmosphere of the pageant was similar to her military training, she said, describing the pageant as a "wonderful experience."

After her commissioning, Puro plans to branch Medical Service or Nursing Corps, study toward a master's degree in nursing — labor and delivery — and one day start a family of her own.

